

Be A Lert!

LEVEL: K-1-2-3-4-5-6

SUBJECT AREA(S): Health, Language Arts, Art, Social Studies

OBJECTIVE: Students will learn how to be smart (safe) and alert pedestrians. (This lesson builds on Lessons 5 through 10.)

For Your Information

None of the lessons about crossing streets fully address traffic signals because of their complexity.

TIME: Two to three 45-minute sessions

MATERIALS

Chalkboard, chart paper, or overhead projector
Various art supplies

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Discuss with students any experiences they've had with traffic crashes.

For Your Information

More than 50,000 children in the United States are killed or injured in traffic crashes every year, making it vitally important that children learn basic rules for walking on city streets.

1. Within this discussion, have students review the following vocabulary and questions, which also can be made into a matching game for homework:

Vocabulary

A Lert: a creature who is constantly aware of what is going on in its environment.

Intersection: a place where two or more streets meet.

Pedestrian: a person traveling on foot or in a wheelchair.

Reflectivity: the quality of being visible when there is little light.

Scan: to look in all directions.

Shoulder: the space at the edge of a road or street.

Sidewalk: a paved or unpaved walkway usually separated from traffic by a curb.

Visibility: the ability to see or be seen.

Questions

Q: Why must pedestrians walk facing traffic when there's no sidewalk or path?

(Pedestrians have a better chance to see vehicles coming from ahead than from behind.)

Q. What makes a route safer for walking?

Smarter (Safer) Walking Routes vs. Risky (Less Safe) Walking Routes

Sidewalks or paths vs. No sidewalks or paths

Wide shoulders vs. Narrow or no shoulders

Light traffic vs. Heavy traffic

Speed limit under 35 mph vs. Speed limit over 35 mph

High visibility vs. Low visibility

Straight streets vs. Curvy and hilly streets

Streetlights vs. No streetlights

Q. What should a pedestrian do to prepare for walking in bad weather or at night?

(To walk when visibility is low, pedestrians must wear bright clothes with naturally reflective or retro-reflective materials: tape, iron-ons, tags, etc. It is recommended that children do not walk when there are conditions of very low visibility, especially at night.)

Q. How and where should children cross the street?

(At a corner, ideally where there is a marked crosswalk, or a WALK/DON'T WALK signal. Young students can learn how to cross streets by memorizing the following rhyme, first introduced in Lesson 7, and saying it aloud.)

Use Your Head Before Your Feet.

Stop every time at the edge of the street.

(Hold your hand up to signal "Stop.")

Use your head before your feet.

(Point to your head and feet as words are said.)

Make sure you hear every sound.

(Cup your hands behind your ears and turn your head from side to side.)

Look left and right and all around.

(Cup your hands above your eyes and turn your head slowly left to right, right to left, and look over your shoulders.)

Q. Why is it wise to always walk with a partner?

(Because you can look out for each other and rely on one another if there's trouble.)

2. Have students review what they know about pedestrian safety, including their answers to the discussion above. Divide them into groups and have them turn their knowledge into rules. Have each group demonstrate one of the rules.

Possible Rules

- **A Lert always walks on the sidewalks.**
 - **A Lert always dresses to be visible.** The students in this group can model items of clothing with retro-reflective tape and other gear appropriate for walking at night or when the weather is bad. In addition to or in place of modeling, they can create examples using pictures of visible and not visible clothing cut out of magazines and catalogs.
 - **A Lert always scans both ways and listens before crossing.** Students can repeat the rhyme they learned in preparation for sharing it with younger students in the Extension. Some younger students will already have learned it in Lesson 7.
 - **A Lert always waits for the WALK signal, when there is one.**
 - **A Lert always walks facing traffic when there is no sidewalk.**
 - **A Lert always walks with a partner.** The partner should be a parent, guardian or grown-up friend approved by a parent/guardian.
3. Have the class “adopt” a class of younger students in order to teach the younger kids to be smart (safe) pedestrians. Develop presentations based on the information covered in this lesson plan.

After making their presentations, assign each of the older students to a younger student in preparation for the next lesson, Lesson 13: Taking it to the Streets.

ASSESSMENT

Have students write about their presentations to younger students, perhaps as homework.

EXTENSIONS

1. Instead of using the rhyme provided, have students create a new rhyme, song, or rap about pedestrian safety. Have them teach it to younger students.
2. Based on the theme “Be A Lert!” have students draw a “Lert.” The drawings can be made into buttons or printed on t-shirts to promote pedestrian safety. This extension could be made into a school-wide project, with students voting on the best “Lert.”

3. Safest-Route-to-School Project: Using maps of the local area survey the community and highlight all streets with sidewalks, footpaths, and/or bike paths. Make copies of the map and distribute it to all students in the school.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please refer to the Iowa Safe Routes to School Encouragement and Education Program Web site for additional resources (www.iowasaferoutes.org).